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Charges loom for Mike Duffy

RCMP is expected to announce criminal charges against the suspended senator today PAGE 10

An 'incredibly sad' time

Liknes family thanks Calgarians for their support PAGE 3

THANKS FOR THE DOUGH, NOW TO MY MOVIE PLEASE GO

metro AR

ZACH BRAFF DESCRIBES HOW CROWDFUNDING ALLOWED HIM TO MAKE HIS FILM, WISH I WAS HERE, THE WAY HE WANTED PAGE 16

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Jennifer Gabucci got a good view for an even better cause Wednesday, taking part in the Make-a-Wish foundation's Rope For Hope event. Participants raised money for the chance to rappel down the side of the Westin Hotel. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Mother pleads guilty after starving twins

Manslaughter charges. One of the local mom's two daughters died after both were subjected to lack of food and physical abuse

An Edmonton mother has pleaded guilty to manslaughter for starving and abusing her two-year-old twin daughters before one of them died in hospital.

The woman, who can't be named to protect the identity of her surviving twin, also pleaded guilty Wednesday to aggravated assault and failing to provide the necessities of life. She originally had been charged with second-degree murder.

The 36-year-old is to appear in court next week to set a date for a sentencing hearing.

The woman's husband, and the father of the twins, pleaded guilty earlier this year to manslaughter and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Court heard he didn't physically injure the girls, but did nothing as they suffered. The mother admits in a court document that she didn't provide the twins with adequate food and assaulted them both over a prolonged period of time. The assaults led to serious head injuries.

"She subjected both twins to significant inflicted head trauma and yet failed to seek medical attention, knowing the significant force she used to cause their injuries," says the document.

Missing from both court cases has been an explanation for the crime. Court heard the twins had an older brother who was well fed and healthy.

The couple immigrated to Canada from Algeria in 2008 and their three children were all born in Edmonton. The man worked as a machinist and the woman stayed home with the kids. On May 25, 2012, the court document says the woman called her husband while he was working a night shift and said one of their daughters wasn't breathing.

The paramedics were initially confused, because they were looking for a sick toddler, but could only find two little babies sitting in their car seats. When they looked closer, they realized they weren't infants at all.

Skin was hanging loose on their bodies, their ribs stuck out from their chests and they were covered in scabs and bruises. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Airdrie fields

Police urge against civilian searches

Police and RCMP are applauding the intentions of civilian searchers who were due to comb Airdrie fields for a second night Tuesday for clues in an ongoing triple-murder investigation, but warn their efforts could actually harm potential evidence.

It's believed 250 people showed up Monday evening for a grid search in the Airdrie area for clues on the disappearance and alleged murders of five-year-old Calgary boy Nathan O'Brien and his grandparents, Alvin and Kathryn Liknes.

Murder charges have been laid in connection with the believed deaths of all three, but police say they've yet to recover bodies.

Airdrie search organizers had indicated on a Facebook page they intended to pick up scouring efforts again Tuesday evening.

But Kevin Brookwell, Calgary police spokesperson, said investigators would prefer residents check only their own properties for irregularities. He praised the "amazing" effort to aid victims' families but said volunteers are essentially searching "blind."

"We know what we're looking for," Brookwell said. "There are certain pieces to this file — certain pieces of evidence — that we specifically are looking for, and we have a pretty good idea where those items may be ... this is the kind of information we can't share."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO, WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

Allen Liknes was the family's lone representative in court Wednesday as the accused in the triple-murder investigation made his first court appearance.

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Liknes family thanks Calgary for 'strength'

Triple-murder case. Accused makes brief first court appearance

BRYAN WEISMILLER
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Allen Liknes thanked Calgarians Wednesday for their outpouring of support, as the man accused of three murders in the slaying of five-year-old Nathan O'Brien and his grandparents made his first court appearance.

Liknes, son of businessman Alvin Liknes, said the tributes and search efforts have helped his relatives get through what's been an "incredibly sad" affair.

"The family has taken a lot of strength from it," Liknes told a throng of media gathered outside the downtown courthouse.

Douglas Garland, 54, faces two first-degree murder charges and one second-degree charge in connection to the alleged abduction case that's gripped Calgarians since the disappearance was first made public.

The case was adjourned until mid-August with the defence counsel asking for more time to get disclosure of the police investigation.

Garland's lawyer, Kim Ross, also told reporters he'd wait to review those files thoroughly before deciding "whether or not we'll seek any kind of release."

Lead Crown prosecutor Shane Parker said outside court he would be opposing bail for Garland as the case moves forward.

The court proceedings come the day after Calgarians released green balloons as a symbol of hope, and others have formed search parties to continue looking for the missing trio.

Alvin Liknes, his wife Kathryn and grandson Nathan were last seen at the couple's Parkhill-area home June 30.

Police have alleged a "violent crime" occurred inside the home and told reporters they found forensic evidence that suggests the trio didn't leave on their own volition.

Garland was arrested near his parents' acreage in Airdrie earlier this week, which has been the ongoing site of a massive search.

Giving back

Mealshare program expanding to six more restaurants

Six more local restaurants have been added to the Mealshare program as of Wednesday, officials said.

Culina Mill Creek, North 53, Block 1912, Rosso Pizzeria, Dauphine Bakery and Knosh Food Truck are all going to start sharing meals with those in need in addition to the four other restaurants already part of the program.

"It's a really easy way for customers to give back to people in need," said Jeremy Bryant, co-founder of Mealshare.

When customers purchase a dish with the special logo associated with a dish at participating restaurants, a meal will in turn be donated to those in need. To date, 65,000 meals have been handed out in four cities, with no extra cost for customers.

STEPHANIE DUBOIS/METRO

On the web

For more local news, go to metronews.ca

The local Mealshare program is growing, with more local restaurants helping those in need. METRO FILE

Forest fires

Air quality warning expands

The province's health authority has expanded the air quality warning for the Edmonton area, as smoke from forest fires in the Northwest Territories cloud city skies.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) released its latest advisory Wednesday, notifying residents the fires continue to affect air quality in northern Alberta and are expected to spread to communities in central parts of the province soon.

"Residents of, and visitors to, the North, Edmonton and Central Zones of AHS are advised to be aware of and take precautions against potential health concerns that can be associated with smoky air conditions," AHS said in a release. METRO

Edmonton moves ahead with Blatchford borrowing

Self-sustaining. Mayor assures development will pay for itself

RYAN TUMILTY
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The Blatchford development took another step toward take-off Wednesday, as council moved ahead with plans to borrow $80 million to get the project underway.

Councillors passed first reading on a borrowing bylaw, with a proposal that the city borrow the money upfront and then be paid back through the first land sales.

Mayor Don Iveson said now that they know what they're building it makes sense to move ahead.

He said the loan is just a bridge, because the development will ultimately pay for itself.

"The taxpayers are not footing the bill for this. You can think of it as a line of credit that covers the front-end costs and will be paid back by the project," he said.

Coun. Mike Nickel, who voted against the proposal, said he still has too many questions about the development and doesn't like having council write a "blank cheque" to move ahead.

"In the absence of a clear picture, we are putting the money before the development," he said.

City administration expects the cost of the project, over the span of 25 years, to be $631 million. They also expect that with inflation counted in, the city will make a profit of $229 million over the life of the project.

That number is up from $45 million just a few weeks ago, but administration said they had failed to figure inflation into their scenarios.

The project's executive director Mark Hall said that most of the large costs are early in the project, with the profits coming later on as the land is sold.

Hall also admitted a lot can change over 25 years, but Iveson said he's not concerned, because the city isn't sinking in all the money at once.

"What we are talking about is a project that happen in stages and our exposure at any time is much less than the value of the land," he said.

In numbers

30,000

The city expects the redevelopment will eventually house 30,000 people.

A diagram of the Blatchford development. Demolition work is in the early stages on some airport buildings and the city hopes to have the first residents move into the new neighbourhood in 2016. CONTRIBUTED

Body of Kevin Ducharme recovered from river

Kevin Ducharme holds his three-year-old son. CONTRIBUTED

The family of a 22-year-old area man, swept away in the North Saskatchewan River on the weekend, confirm his body was recovered from the river Wednesday after almost two full days of search efforts.

Edmonton police responded to reports a body was floating in the North Saskatchewan River under the Quesnell Bridge just after 6:45 a.m.

Fire rescue was dispatched from Fire Hall No. 12 to recover the body of Kevin Ducharme, which was transferred to the shore by jet boat, where EMS and EPS took over the scene.

Ellen Ducharme, Kevin's mother, said she's happy to have closure after her son was last seen trying to cross the river by the Devon Bridge Sunday.

"He's not out there floating down the river anymore. He's coming back home and he can rest in peace now," said Ellen.

"He's going to be deeply missed by everyone," she added.

Ellen had been at the river shore with Ducharme and his three-year-old Sunday, for a family afternoon.

"We were out there and Kevin and his girlfriend came to visit us at the river. We were just having a fun, family Sunday afternoon there," she said.

Kevin would sometimes head down to the river but not to swim, Ellen said, adding that Sunday was one of the first times the family went to the river together.

"He was a great father," Ellen said. "He was a great son." LEAH GERMAIN/METRO

Rest in peace

> "He's not out there floating down the river anymore. He's coming back home and he can rest in peace now."
>
> Ellen Ducharme, mother of river victim

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[1]Offer valid in-store during tour events with purchase of Sands Alive! product while quantities last.

Council meeting.
Walters floats Churchill Square smoking ban

Coun. Michael Walters wants people in Churchill Square to butt out.

During Wednesday's council meeting, Walters asked administration to look into whether the city has the legal authority for such a ban.

He said smokers in the square are ruining the atmosphere that the city is hoping to create.

"We want that place to be packed all the time and the level of smoking in the square, I think, deters people from coming," he said.

The city has imposed smoking bans around playgrounds and soccer fields and the water fountain outside of city hall is a no-smoking zone.

Walters said with all the festivals and activities in Churchill Square it only makes sense to extend the ban. He said during the Street Performers Festival he saw people walk away from a performance after someone lit up nearby.

Janice Normandin, who was having lunch in the square Wednesday, said she moves when smokers light up in the square and would welcome a ban, but wonders how plausible it is.

"It's a pain in the butt to work around smokers, but I don't know how you would enforce that," she said. "It's an open public area."

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Police seek assistance

Two men sought in shooting, robbery

Edmonton police are asking for the public's help identifying two men involved in an alleged shooting and personal robbery.

On June 30 at approximately 3 a.m., police report two men approached a man and a woman as they walked to their car behind E-BAR on the corner of 100 Avenue and 105 Street. The suspects allegedly brandished a gun and demanded a necklace the man wore.

The first suspect is described as a black male in his mid-20s wearing a white hoodie and black runners.

The second is described as a black male in his mid-20s, approximately five-foot-four with his hair in cornrows. METRO

Eskimos game

Time's up for 50/50 draw winner

The luck has run out for one lucky winner of the Eskimos' most recent 50/50 jackpot.

The $71,000 jackpot from last Friday's game against the Ottawa Redblacks went unclaimed by the Tuesday night deadline the team set for someone to come forward.

The team has contacted the Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission for permission to roll the prize into the next home game on July 24.

METRO

For more local news, visit metronews.ca

Edmonton Police Service Specialized Traffic Apprehension Team (STAT) Sgt. David Green advises people looking for speed to head to Castrol Raceway rather than testing their luck on city streets. LEAH GERMAIN/METRO

'Go to Castrol Raceway': Cops

Speeding crackdown. Police say pair were driving 100 km/h over the speed limit

LEAH GERMAIN
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Two Edmonton drivers speeding 100 kilometres an hour over the posted limit Monday are being slapped with criminal charges as police continue to ticket lead-footed drivers throughout the city.

Ahmad Sayed Abou Alhassan, 26, and Jamal Ibrahim Smilley, 21, have been charged with dangerous operation of a motor vehicle and could be facing street-racing charges, after EPS witnessed them driving 160 km/h in a 60 km/h zone.

At approximately 9:30 p.m. Monday, a member of the Edmonton Police Service Specialized Traffic Apprehension Team (STAT) witnessed a Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG and a BMW M5 weaving in and out of traffic, speeding down 137 Avenue at Castle Downs Road.

According to police, the pair was also seen by off-duty officers changing lanes aggressively and speeding on 137 Avenue at St. Albert Trail.

Lots of lead feet

248

The number of mandatory court tickets for excessive speeding issued so far this year

Sgt. David Green with EPS STAT said police continue to see high-flying drivers racing at top speeds throughout the city. The issue, Green explained, is collisions are far more likely to happen when drivers are speeding.

"At that speed, in ideal conditions provided, you're not skidding and your tires don't lock up, you're not on gravel, you're looking at 328 metres before your vehicle comes to a rest," Green said.

"You have to be paying attention not only for where you are, but for every single metre in front of you," he added.

In 2014, there have been 248 mandatory court tickets issued for excessive speeding (more than 50 km/h over speed limit), with an additional 21,666 speeding tickets issued by officers.

"If you want to drive like an idiot, as fast as you can and so forth, go to Castrol Raceway," Green advised. "That's what it's there for."

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Hague tells Netherlands to compensate families of Srebrenica victims

1995 massacre. The civil court in the Hague, however, cleared the country of liability in the deaths of nearly 8,000 others

A court on Wednesday ordered the Netherlands to compensate the families of more than 300 Bosnian Muslims killed after Dutch troops handed them over to Bosnian Serb forces in 1995, in a ruling that could make countries more leery to contribute troops to peacekeeping missions.

The civil court in The Hague cleared the Netherlands of liability in the massacre of nearly 8,000 others, saying that although those people sought protection in the U.N. safe haven of Srebrenica they were never directly in the custody of the Dutch troops.

The ruling could be appealed, however. The court ruled that the Dutch peacekeeping troops could have protected the 300-plus men and boys who were among thousands of Muslims — mainly women, children and elderly people — taking shelter in a Dutch compound inside the U.N.-declared safe haven of Srebrenica.

A Bosnian Muslim woman cries on a coffin in Srebrenica, Bosnia on July 11, 2014. AMEL EMRIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The troops — part of a Dutch U.N. battalion known as Dutchbat — handed over those in the compound two days after the town fell. The Bosnian Serb troops then killed the Muslim men and boys, who "would have survived if Dutchbat had acted properly," said Presiding Judge Larissa Alwin.

In an emotionally charged hearing attended by a handful of victims' relatives, Alwin said the peacekeepers should have known that the men taken from the compound would be slain because there was already evidence of Serb forces committing war crimes.

On July 13, 1995, the peacekeepers bowed to pressure from Bosnian Serb forces commanded by Gen. Ratko Mladic and forced thousands of Muslim families out of their fenced-off compound. The Bosnian Serb forces sorted the Muslims by gender, then trucked the males away and began killing them in what would become the bloody climax to the 1992-95 Bosnian war, a slaughter that international courts have ruled was genocide.

Defence Ministry spokesman Klaas Meijder said the Dutch government began insisting on stricter safeguards for its troops involved in U.N. missions after Srebrenica, but wouldn't speculate on whether Wednesday's ruling would have any impact. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Typhoon kills at least seven in Philippines

A Filipino boy tries to sweep out floating debris from his flooded home on Wednesday, as Typhoon Rammasun battered suburban Quezon City, north of Manila, Philippines. Typhoon Rammasun knocked out power in many areas and left at least seven people dead, but it spared the Philippines' capital, Manila, and densely-populated northern provinces from devastation when its fierce wind shifted slightly away, officials said.

AARON FAVILA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tales of abuse

Hundreds freed in Mexican raid

Mexican prosecutors said Wednesday that victims told harrowing tales of sexual abuse, beatings, hunger and filth in a once well-regarded group home where authorities freed a total of 607 adults and children in a raid.

Some people were forced into sex by shelter employees while others told of being locked in a tiny punishment room without food or water. Ten of the victims were so malnourished police couldn't even determine their age.

In total, the police raid on Tuesday freed six babies, 154 girls, 278 boys, 50 women and 109 men from the filthy shelter, where Attorney General Jésus Murillo Karam said people lived among 20 tons of garbage. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sweden. Court upholds Assange detention order

A Swedish court on Wednesday upheld its detention order on Julian Assange, reaffirming the legal basis for an international warrant for the WikiLeaks founder which has kept him hiding in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London for two years.

One of Assange's defence lawyers, Per Samuelson, said they would study the judge's decision in detail and then "write a juicy, toxic appeal" to a higher court.

"Our legal arguments are solid and powerful," Samuelson said. "That they didn't work could be because the judge didn't give herself enough time to think." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

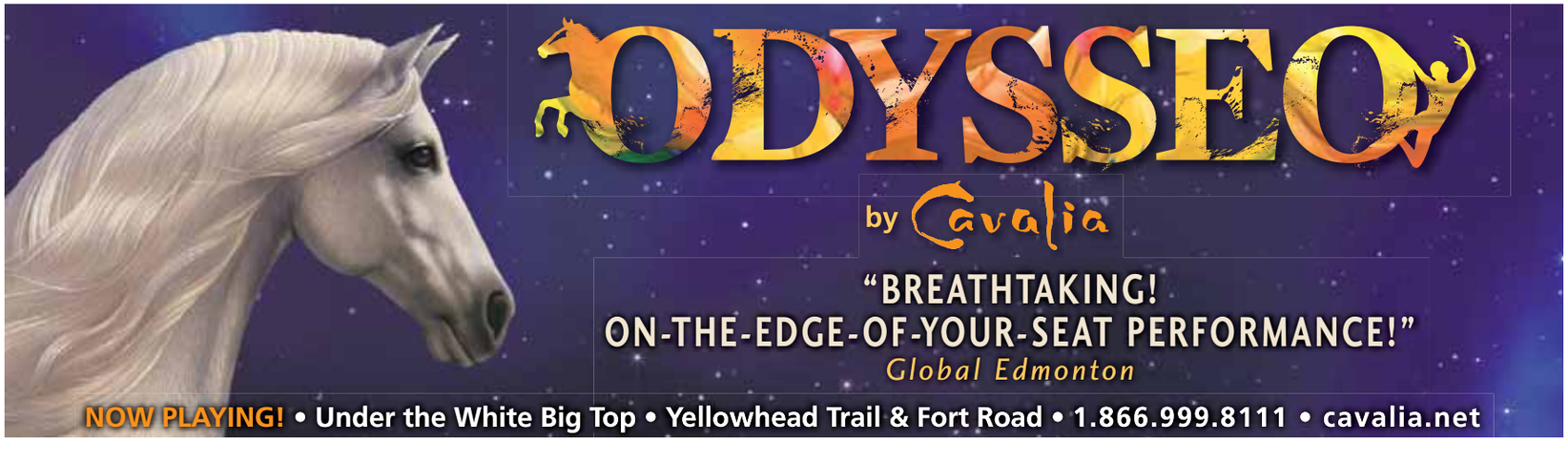
Moscow. Two detained after subway derailment

Investigators detained two Moscow subway workers Wednesday in the wake of a deadly rush-hour derailment that killed 22 people and injured 136 others.

More than 1,100 people were evacuated Tuesday after a train derailed between two stations in western Moscow.

Eight people remained in critical condition and 40 others have serious injuries, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said in comments carried by Russian news agencies.

Russia's investigative agency said it had detained a senior Moscow track foreman and his assistant. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Israeli airstrikes. Many Gazans have nowhere to run despite warnings

The text message was as urgent as it was unwelcome: the Israeli army advised Mouin Ghaffir to leave his home quickly or risk being killed in airstrikes against Hamas rocket squads.

He swiftly sent his wife and 11 children to a dirty UN emergency shelter, with more than 40 people crammed in each classroom, but had to endure a night under bombardment at home after failing to find a safe place for his ailing 75-year-old mother.

Such is the life-and-death predicament of tens of thousands of Gazans being told by Israel to flee targeted areas, most with nowhere to go. UN shelters lack the space, and relatives, with their own overcrowded homes, often cannot help.

Israel says urging residents to evacuate — with warnings delivered through automated calls, text messages and leaflets dropped from planes — is an attempt to spare civilians whenever possible.

Ghaffir's story highlights the hard choices Gazans face in this war. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Syria

Assad sworn in as president — again

In a lavish ceremony, a smiling and confident President Bashar Assad was sworn in for a third seven-year term on Wednesday, praising his supporters for "defeating the dirty war" and denouncing insurgents who have "failed in trying to brainwash you or break your will."

As he declared victory, the Western-backed goal of toppling him or reaching a political deal seems increasingly elusive. Syria's three-year-old civil war is grinding on, with 170,000 dead and a third of the country displaced.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israel to pause bombing of Gaza after UN request

Palestinians flee their homes in the Shajaiyeh neighborhood of Gaza City after Israel had airdropped leaflets warning people to leave the area on Wednesday.

LEFTERIS PITARAKIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gaza Strip. Five-hour 'humanitarian' window comes hours after Israeli navy kills four Palestinian boys

The Israeli military agreed to a UN-brokered five-hour "humanitarian" pause starting Thursday morning in its strikes on the Gaza Strip to allow Palestinians to restock food, water and other necessities, hours after an attack by an Israeli naval vessel killed four Palestinian boys playing on the beach.

In response to a call by the UN, the military said in a statement Wednesday that it would hold its fire for five hours starting at 10:00 a.m. local time but warned it will retaliate "firmly and decisively" if militants launch attacks on Israel during that time.

UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Robert Serry, the UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, made the appeal for a "unilateral humanitarian pause" after talks with Israel's Coordination Office for Government Affairs in the (Palestinian) Territories.

The announcement came after a day of Israeli airstrikes and Palestinian militant rocket attacks as Hamas formally rejected a ceasefire proposal that had been accepted by Israel to end the nine-day-old conflict that officials say has left at least 213 Palestinians and one Israeli dead.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"It's a cold-blooded massacre."

Abdel Kareem Baker, the uncle of four boys killed Wednesday by an Israeli naval vessel while they were playing on a beach

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‘Beginning of the end of the AIDS epidemic’: UN agency

UNAIDS. Group also sets targets to reduce AIDS-related deaths and new cases by 90 per cent by 2030

A newly-diagnosed HIV-positive woman, who arrived at the hospital with symptoms of tuberculosis, receives treatment at the Mildmay Uganda clinic in Kampala, Uganda. REBECCA VASSIE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The number of people living with HIV worldwide has remained virtually unchanged in the past two years and AIDS-related deaths are at their lowest since peaking almost a decade ago, according to a report from the United Nations AIDS agency released Wednesday.

Officials declared that ending the AIDS epidemic is possible even though they acknowledged the number of new infections — more than 2 million last year — was still very high. UNAIDS estimated there were about 35 million people living with HIV last year and in 2012.

The agency also set targets to reduce deaths and new cases by 90 per cent by 2030. It previously unveiled a strategy to get to “zero AIDS-related deaths,” which included ensuring all people who need treatment are on it by 2015.

Last year, there were about 12.9 million people receiving life-saving drugs and 22 million people still waiting. Some 1.5 million people died from AIDS-related causes.

Other health experts questioned whether setting more ambitious targets is wise.

“This idea of ending AIDS isn’t realistic,” said Sophie Harman, a senior lecturer in public health at Queen Mary University of London, who was not part of the report. She said it would be more helpful to think about managing the epidemic.

“Everyone can get behind ending AIDS, but this report doesn’t really tell us how to do that.”

Still, UNAIDS insisted in its report that we are at the “beginning of the end of the AIDS epidemic” and said the global outbreak can be stopped by 2030.

But with no vaccine and millions of people carrying the virus or becoming newly infected, some scientists said ending HIV may be idealistic rather than practical.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Packing heat

Man tries to board plane with loaded gun in carry-on

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration says it stopped a man who had a loaded .38-calibre handgun in his carry-on luggage at Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

The agency says it’s the 14th firearm found so far this year at the airport in the Detroit suburb of Romulus.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

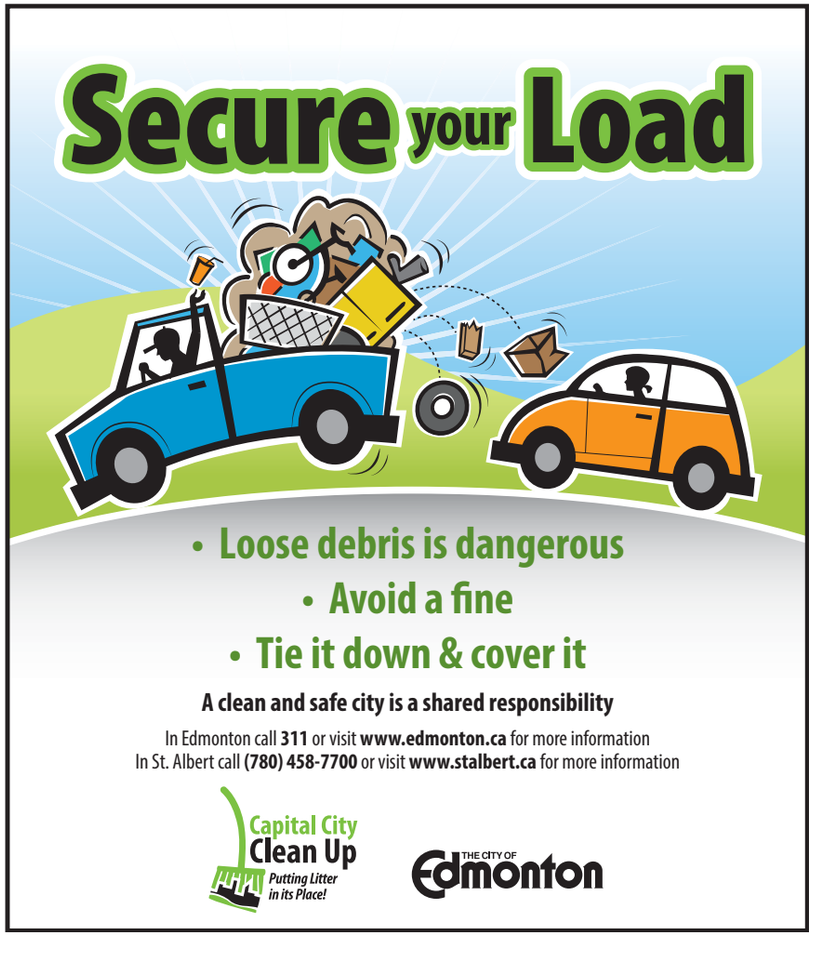
Death penalty

Punishment ruled unconstitutional

A federal judge in Los Angeles has ruled California’s death penalty unconstitutional.

The ruling Wednesday by U.S. District Court Judge Cormac J. Carney follows a similar ruling in Northern California that has kept the death penalty on hold in the state for years.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Duffy expected to face charges

Expenses scandal. RCMP set to announce charges against disgraced senator Thursday morning

The RCMP is expected to announce criminal charges against suspended senator Mike Duffy at a news conference Thursday morning.

Torstar News Service has learned the Mounties are expected to charge Duffy in relation to inappropriately claimed living and travel expenses for which the senator for Prince Edward Island was reimbursed out of public funds.

Duffy is also expected to face charges in connection with a separate alleged misuse of public funds. An RCMP investigator outlined suspicions in October that Duffy made about $65,000 in payments to a former CTV pal under a contract the man said he did "little or no work" for.

In this latest turn in the Senate spending scandal, the biggest political question facing the Conservative government may also be answered at the news conference: Will Duffy face criminal charges in connection with demanding and accepting a $90,000 payment from Nigel Wright, the former chief of staff to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, in order to repay the money which an embarrassed government felt he owed the Senate?

The answer to that is crucial for the Harper government. If charges are laid, Duffy — who claims he is innocent and was forced by the PMO to admit to "mistakes" in his expense claims — has reportedly suggested that his lawyers would call the prime minister to be a witness at any criminal trial.

The RCMP has been probing Duffy's affairs for more than 14 months. In April, it announced its investigators had concluded that "the evidence gathered does not support criminal charges against Mr. Wright."

However, the decision not to charge Wright with breach of public trust, fraud or bribery — suspicions the RCMP first outlined in an affidavit signed by Cpl. Greg Horton last November — was widely understood to imply Wright would be a key witness in any prosecution of Duffy in relation to the payment.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Suspended senator Mike Duffy THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Mr. Steffel, meet your baby daughter, Sophia

This image shows a family photo of Sophia Steffel, left, and a retouched version by Jillian Johnston of Mountain View, Calif. After Sophia died in a Cincinnati hospital last week, her father, Nathen Steffel, asked users on the website Reddit if someone could alter the hospital photo since he was "never able to get a photo without all her tubes." Johnston's work was one of hundreds sent in response. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Texas. Friends, family mourn couple and their four children shot dead

Family and friends laid to rest on Wednesday a couple and their four children who were shot to death in their suburban Houston home.

Stephen Stay, 39, his 34-year-old wife Katie and their four youngest children aged four to 13 were killed last week.

The oldest child, Cassidy, 15, survived the attack by playing dead, called police and identified her ex-uncle, 33-year-old Ronald Lee Haskell, as the gunman.

Authorities say Ronald Lee Haskell, the ex-husband of Katie Stay's sister, stormed into the family's home, bound them face-down on the floor and shot them.

Haskell had a handful of previous run-ins with law enforcement in Utah, where he had lived with his wife. Neighbours said Haskell's marriage was so rocky that Stay went to Utah last fall to help her sister escape the relationship and start a new life in Texas. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cassidy Stay, centre, cries after a funeral service for her parents and siblings on Wednesday in Houston. DAVID J. PHILLIP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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UBC researcher

Elephants with GPS collars

Forget Google Earth. Try Google Elephant.

Thanks in part to a tech-savvy PhD student at the University of British Columbia, rangers in northern Kenya are using high-tech to combat poaching.

Jake Wall of UBC's geography department has helped outfit almost 100 elephants with GPS satellite-tracking collars and designed complex algorithms that crunch the live data.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Guyana. Four feared dead after apparent attack by machete-wielding pirates

Four fishermen from Guyana are feared dead after an apparent attack by machete-wielding bandits who boarded their boat at sea, officials said Wednesday.

Agriculture Minister Leslie Ramsammy said the attack reportedly occurred off the coast of neighbouring Suriname.

The fishing boat's captain told police that he jumped into the Atlantic as the vessel was being boarded by men with machetes. He told investigators his four crewmates were attacked and apparently dumped overboard.

No bodies have been recovered, but police say the blood-spattered boat was recently found drifting at sea.

Guyana's fishermen have complained for years about pirates who seize catches and equipment — even their boats. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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NISKU FORD
ABOVE EXPECTATIONS

Get a warrant. Pair of telecoms no longer giving info to police without one

Two major telecommunications firms — Rogers and Telus — say they will no longer routinely give basic customer information to police and security agencies without first seeing a warrant.

In June, the Supreme Court ruled police need judicial authorization to get personal information about customers from Internet providers.

Rogers chief privacy officer Ken Engelhart said Wednesday the Supreme Court ruling — reinforced by demands from subscribers for better privacy protection — means the practice of routine disclosure must cease.

"The Supreme Court has really made the decision. They're really the ones who have said, under the laws of Canada you have to have an order signed by a judge," he said in an interview.

The new policy stresses that, in keeping with the high court ruling, police would not need a warrant to get basic subscriber information in life-threatening emergencies.

By the numbers

- **175,000.** The number of requests for customer info Rogers received from government and police agencies last year
- **87,856.** The number of times Rogers shared names and addresses

In addition, if police have an Internet Protocol, or IP, address of interest and want to obtain a warrant to investigate further, Rogers will tell them which city the relevant customer lives in so they know which judge to approach, Engelhart said.

Telus Corp. said that in light of the Supreme Court decision, it no longer provides any customer information to law enforcement without a warrant except in emergency situations, such as when a customer calls 911 for help, or if the information is already published in a phone book. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 93.06¢ (+.11¢)

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OIL $101.20 US (+$1.24)

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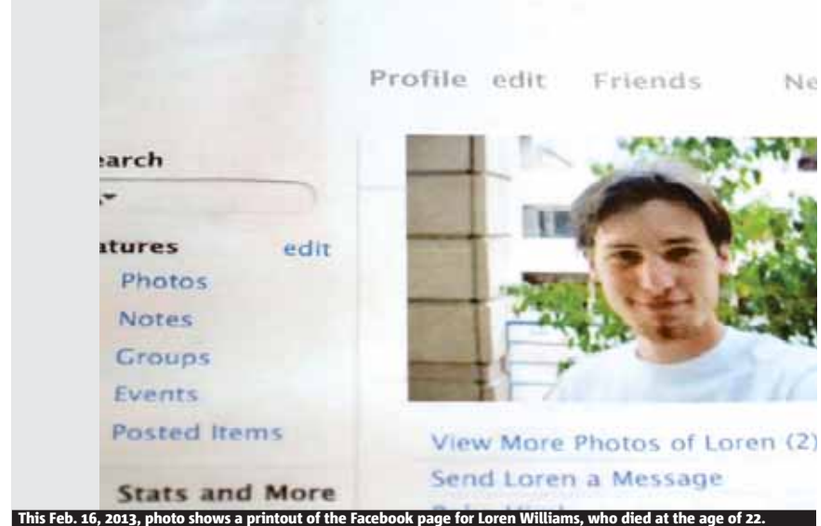
Dow Jones: 17,138.2 (+77.52)

What happens to your online life when you die?

Digital afterlife. Advocates fight to give next-of-kin access to digital accounts of deceased



This Feb. 16, 2013, photo shows a printout of the Facebook page for Loren Williams, who died at the age of 22.
LAUREN GAMBINO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

When you die, should your loved ones have access to your Facebook, Yahoo and other online accounts?

A group of influential lawyers says yes, unless you specify otherwise in a will. The Uniform Law Commission was expected to endorse a plan Wednesday to automatically give loved ones access to — but not control of — all digital accounts, unless otherwise specified.

To become law in a U.S. state, the plan would have to be adopted by the state's legislature. But if it does, designating such access could become an important tool in estate planning, allowing people to decide which accounts should die when they do.

Grieving relatives want access for sentimental reasons, and to settle financial issues. A person's online musings, photos and videos — such as a popular cooking blog or a gaming avatar that has acquired a certain status online — also can be worth money. Imagine the trove of digital files being amassed by someone of historical value — say former President Bill Clinton or musician Bob Dylan — and what those files might fetch on an auction block.

"Our email accounts are our filing cabinets these days," said Suzanne Brown Walsh, a Cummings & Lockwood attorney who chaired the drafting committee on the bill. But "if you need access to an email account, in most states you wouldn't get it."

Ginger McCall, associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, said a judge's approval should be needed to protect the privacy of both the owners of accounts and the people who communicate with them.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Online legacy

"This is something most people don't think of until they are faced with it. They have no idea what is about to be lost."

Karen Williams of Beaverton, Ore., who sued Facebook for access to her son Loren's account after he died at the age of 22.

Minimum wage ratio likely to go up

The average minimum wage has remained unchanged in real terms for almost four decades, but economists say more recent increases are likely to continue in the coming years.

Statistics Canada said Wednesday the average minimum wage was $10.14 in 2013 and the 1975 wage, expressed in 2013 dollars, was $10.13.

Between 1975 and 2013, however, the minimum wage in 2013 dollars, varied, slipping to $7.53 in 1986 before rising to $8.81 in 1996 — and up to 2003, the real minimum wage remained stable at around $8.50.

"If you're looking at it in terms of have we made any progress, well, in real terms, no, there hasn't been any growth in almost 40 years adjusted for inflation," said Doug Porter, chief economist with the Bank of Montreal.

"Based on what certain provinces are doing, I think it's fair to assume that it will continue to climb in the years ahead, even adjusted for inflation," he said.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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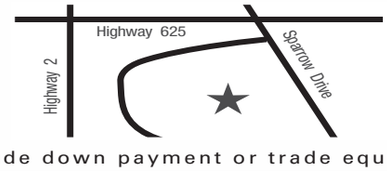

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WOMEN SURE ARE ORGANIZED, AMIRITE?

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

This week I'm on vacation in New Brunswick (motto: "Ride the downward spiral!"), so I'm mailing it in, literally and figuratively.

What quick-and-easy topic should I touch on? Today's music is the worst? Cat people versus dog people? The federal government sucks (amirite)?

Oh wait, I've got it: women and men are different! I've noticed this a lot recently because I'm dating, and my girlfriend is indeed different than I am. I know criticizing a woman runs me the risk of perpetual online hatred until Twitter becomes obsolete, but I can say only what I see: she's just weird, what with her "planning" and "foresight," never mind her "top sheet" and "air freshener."

And as we prepared for our trip to N.B., she sometimes packed in ways so foreign to me I felt I was dealing with a different species. This is not the typical stereotype of a woman who over-packs because she hopes a provincial park with a name like Moose Mill might have call for high heels. No, this is a woman who packs a week in advance to give her the chance to rethink and adjust the placement of items as the departure date nears.

Yes, her packing has a first freaking draft.

"Devon" (she doesn't want her real name used, so let's keep this between us) packs small. She has one carry-on bag for two weeks of travel. It's not that she's a light packer — when she rattled off all the clothing, toiletries and other bric-a-brac in her bag it reminded me of those old McDonald's ads in which a customer orders the entire menu in 30 seconds.

It's like her bag is a TARDIS, bigger on the inside than is physically possible judging by the outside. She packs so densely that other items in the room are drawn in by the bag's gravitational pull. Meanwhile, I put three days of clothes and a stick of deodorant in my backpack and it looks like I've stuffed in several dozen bricks and a dead informant.

Devon says my packing technique is like a smash-and-grab at a jewellery store. "It's basically turning over a drawer into a garbage bag," she says. I don't think that's entirely fair. For instance, I ask myself important questions like, "I wonder what I forgot this time?" (Answer on this trip: a coat.)

Sure, you could spend literally an hour or more planning like my girlfriend, or you could embrace unpredictably and do it my way:

1) Sweep all the items in your medicine cabinet into your backpack.
2) Stuff in a layer of clothes.
3) Add books, laptops, PlayStations and anything else you need to help you get away from it all.
4) Add another layer of clothes. It's like a packing parfait.
5) Compress.
6) Place a framed photo of your family on top.
NOTE: one cat per bag.

And voila. Packing my faster, simpler way will free up more time for you to think about the differences between men and women. Or about that terrible federal government. They suck, amirite?

HEAVY STUFF

Basque stone lifter Ignacio Perurena holds on to a 250-kg stone during an exhibition in Cambo les Bains, southwestern France, on Tuesday. The Basque rural sports trials have their origins in routine rural tasks.
BOB EDME/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No stone left unlifted for Basque strongmen

The Basque people are known for their competitive nature.

Their well-attended rural sports competitions have a variety of games that require an amazing amount of strength and plenty of testosterone.

Wood chopping, lifting hay bales, handling oxen, participating in insane tug-of-wars, running races with 200-pound bags of corn on their backs and more are all part of the Basque rural sports tradition.

However, the best known outside of the region is harrijasotze, or stone lifting. This is a true mighty-man's sport, and only the strongest in the region participate. Competition is fierce, and the best-known champions are looked upon by the locals as heroes, much like popular sporting figures .

The stones used in the lifting competitions are made of granite and usually weigh between 100 and 212 kg, though heavier stones may be used if the lifter wants them and has a proven ability to lift them. Competition stones are cut into squares, spheres, cylinders and rectangles to provide a variety of lifting challenges. CITIESJOURNAL.COM

Bad to the bone

Stone lifting takes its toll on the body. Many professional stone lifters have osteoarthritis by the time they're in their 20s or 30s. Most have retired to become trainers for the next generation by their 40s or 50s.

METRO AUGMENTED REALITY

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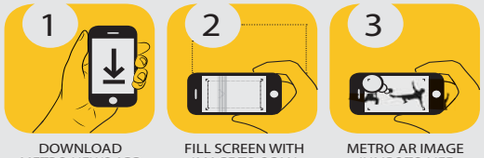

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In this issue, you can find AR enhancements on page 16 in Scene and page 22 in Sports.

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MetroTube

Pimp my used-car ad

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

Craigslist is great. Plenty of no-frills free listings to peruse, excellent deals and amusing Missed Connections. Craigslist is terrible. Ugly, crowded and populated by shady deals and dubious characters.

It's fair to say the seller of this unremarkable hatchback weighed the pros and cons before settling on where to advertise. It's fairer to say his decision was more influenced by his connection to Australian ad agency Chimney Group, which created the slickest campaign for an everyday used car you'll ever see. Dubstep? Check. Smash cuts? Many. Buzzwords? Only the most disruptive. (buymybarina.com/YouTube)

SCREENGRAB

metro
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The skies are open for rising country singer Trinity Bradshaw

Set to soar. Bradshaw remains focused on achieving stardom with relentless touring and prolific creating

JENNIFER LARAWAY
Jennifer Laraway
edmonton@metronews.ca

With the release of her new EP Open Skies, country music's rising star Trinity Bradshaw is ready to spread her lyrical wings. Her single Never Drinkin' Again is a cheeky departure from the polished image and wholesome songs she's built her brand on so far.

But Bradshaw says it's all part of her plan to make it big.

"To tell you the truth, I am more comfortable with these songs. I am a little rough around the edges. This is really me and it just so happens, it all fits with what's trending on the radio," she says.

The Alberta singer believes that letting her true personality shine through her music is part of the path to success.

"Since I was a little girl, I've always had this image where I picture myself being that huge icon that inspires as many people as I can. That has never left my head."

At the same time, she admits there are hurdles on the road to fame.

"There are times where I feel like giving up and I'm sure other artists can say the same.

"But I stay focused on the big goals, so big where other people would think I am crazy. But you need to be crazy, have those crazy dreams to keep going, get past the people who don't get you. Holding onto that, seeing it, is what makes me want to go harder."

Bradshaw isn't afraid of the hard work needed to get attain superstar status. The singer has toured relentlessly while creating new music.

"It's actually very easy to focus but it's easier to become unfocused so I try not to get distracted," Bradshaw says about keeping her energy up during her gruelling schedule.

"I have a great team that helps me balance everything. I want to love this for as long as I can."

Bradshaw is returning to Edmonton for the first time since playing the Canadian Country Music Awards last year.

In preparing for the show, she says, "I am happy with my sets, the band, etc. so my main focus is to make sure the audience is having a really good time by us putting on a good show. I am stoked to be back."

If you go...

- **Where.** Show takes place July 30 at Festival Place.
- **When.** Concert starts at 7:30 p.m.
- **Cost.** Tickets are $8 from festivalplace.ab.ca.

Quoted

"Since I was a little girl, I've always had this image where I picture myself being that huge icon that inspires as many people as I can."
Trinity Bradshaw

Trinity Bradshaw returns to Edmonton July 30 on the heels of her latest EP release. COURTESY STRUT ENTERTAINMENT

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Braff took your money and made a movie

Wish I Was Here. After taking a lot of flack for crowdfunding his indie film, Zach Braff is ready to debut it to the world

STEVE GOW
scene@metronews.ca

Wish I Was Here opens on Friday. CONTRIBUTED

You wouldn't expect it would've been difficult for the guy who made Garden State to follow up his acclaimed hit comedy, but for actor-director Zach Braff, it's been a grind just to get a movie deal.

"There weren't a plethora of deals," admitted Braff recently while discussing his upcoming sophomore feature, Wish I Was Here.

"The only one on the table was to make it for what was essentially half of what I budgeted, make it in Vancouver from a menu of actors I didn't feel were right and not have final cut. I thought I'd rather not make the movie than do that."

Instead, Braff took his dramedy about a struggling Hollywood actor who finds himself at a crossroads after his father develops a terminal illness to website Kickstarter and raised the financing in under two days through crowdfunding.

"Before I had crowdfunding, I had to deal with the inane conversations of casting and a financier is always going to say 'Mandy Patinkin can be on the list but what if it was Robert DeNiro?'" said Braff.

"Once all that nonsense was gone and I was the CEO of this corporation making this movie, I was picking Mandy Patinkin, Josh Gad, Kate Hudson, I was firing off all shots."

The triumph of crowdfunding not only gave Braff full creative control but the experiment also catapulted the Scrubs star into controversy after critics called out the ethics of a wealthy celebrity turning to the public to expense his project.

"There's so much misinformation about this, I had to wage so many debates and really explain film financing to Earth," said Braff.

"One question that does need to be debated is where this money is going to come from for personal indie projects because it's certainly dried up.

"Studios don't make these movies; they buy them at festivals if they like them. I think that's the bigger question."

AUGMENTED REALITY

→ Want to see the trailer for Wish I Was Here? Scan this photo with your Metro News app and go right ahead.

metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Tugging at heartstrings

- **Braff on the emotional punch of the film.** "I'm not saying my goal is to try to make people cry, but I want them to feel emotion, I want their heart to hurt," said Braff. "Otherwise I feel like I failed."

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Taylor Swift. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Taylor Swift suffers revenge of the nerds

Thanks to court documents, we can finally put some names and faces to the three Connecticut residents charged with vandalizing Taylor Swift's Rhode Island vacation home, and the results are … kind of brainy.

Michael Horrigan, 29, Tristan Kading, 28, and Emily Kading, 26, pleaded not guilty to charges they hurled beer bottles and shouted expletives at security guards monitoring Swift's property last month, according to TMZ. So what do they do when they're not drunkenly defacing property?

Tristan Kading, for one, studied chemical oceanography at MIT and received the Richard Montgomery Award for Achievement in Mathematics. Younger sister Emily is studying to be a nuclear physicist, and both Kading and Horrigan were given citations for heroism last year after rescuing a 12-year-old girl from a cap-sized canoe.

Leave it to Swift to attract the nicest, smartest delinquents you could hope for. The defendants, by the way, say they "harboured no ill will toward Swift," who wasn't home at the time.

Jeff Goldblum makes girlfriend cry …tears of joy

Jeff Goldblum is looking to settle down, having popped the question to his girlfriend of two years, 31-year-old gymnast Emilie Livingston, while on vacation in Hawaii.

Livingston took to her Twitter account to gush about making it official with the 61-year-old Jurassic Park star. "I was taken over by tears of joy n ecstasy! We picked the ring 2gether #inlove," she wrote. She later posted a photo of the ring itself.

Jeff Goldblum

Goldblum was previously married to Patricia Gaul from 1980 to 1986 and Geena Davis from 1987 to 1990.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Even on vacation, SJP and Matthew Broderick find trouble in paradise

NED EHRBAR
Metro in Hollywood

You know what everyone loves on a vacation? "Intense discussions." They're the best! And apparently that's what Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker have been having while visiting Ireland.

According to the National Enquirer, Broderick and Parker headed to their usual holiday spot on the Emerald Isle specifically to address their marriage woes and his wandering eye. "They normally venture all around Donegal, but this time they spent the majority of their time locked away in their remote home out in the countryside," a source says. "One evening they went into Nancy's, a seafood restaurant, and hardly said a word to each other."

That sounds so much like the opposite of fun. But hey, at least they're not stewing silently over dinner at home!

Britney Spears

Britney and boyfriend want a family of their own

Those Britney Spears breakup rumours were apparently premature, as the singer and boyfriend David Lucado are reportedly already thinking about expanding her family once she's done with her current Las Vegas residency, according to Radar Online.

"Britney cannot wait until the Vegas show is done because she wants to start a family with David. She says she will get pregnant as soon as the show is finished," a source says. "David is always with her in Vegas and they act like an old married couple together. He is really good with her kids and has taken to the father role pretty easily."

Twitter

@SethMacFarlane
Sorry I haven't tweeted in awhile-- Been immersed in pre-production for Ted 2! I think you're gonna like it.

@ladygaga
I resent that I have to be getting married to wear Bridal, I mean what if I just love wearing white lace and pearls without it being creepy.

@MarkDuplass
Honk if you're feeling slightly overwhelmed about how often you've been feeling slightly overwhelmed these days.

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LIFE 3

PLUS HOMES

What tricks have you got up that sleeveless summer shirt?

Secrets in the sun.
Testy temps no longer have to wreak havoc on your beauty regime with these pointers

RACHEL VIGODA
Metro World News

We spoke with makeup artist B Wilson of Just B Beautiful for insider tips on how to stay looking bright and fresh despite the heat. Wilson and her "glam squad" offer on-location hair and makeup services in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia.

Here are the tricks — and the products — she swears by.

Don't cake it on

"Leave that damn highlighter alone!" Wilson says. "When you sweat, your pores are open, so if you have makeup on your skin the makeup is going right into your pores and clogging them up. Wear the least amount of makeup possible and focus on your natural glow." If you're not brave enough to go totally bare, try a dab of tinted moisturizer and then contour with a light bronzer like Soleil Tan de Chanel. Absolutely refuse to give up foundation? Wilson recommends Urban Decay's Naked Skin, which is "super light, but gives surprisingly full coverage."

Light and bright

"Leave that damn highlighter alone! Wear the least amount of makeup possible and focus on your natural glow."
B Wilson
Makeup artist

Get a (sunless) tan — no matter what your skin colour is

Use a sunless tanner on your legs, whether you're "the palest of pale to the darkest of dark," says Wilson: "I'm African American, and I still get a spray tan on my legs." The trick is a very light touch; you're going for a subtle glow just a shade or two darker than your natural color to create a smooth, even, firm look. Wilson goes to The Bronzed Bee in Philadelphia for a customized airbrush spray tan. For a cheaper DIY option, she likes Airbrush Legs by Sally Hansen or Jergens Natural Glow.

Wouldn't it be nice to let the natural you out into the world? ISTOCK

Make an easy at-home cellulite eraser

Mask cellulite with this simple recipe:

- Instant coffee (caffeinated)
- Almond oil or vitamin E oil
- Brown sugar

Combine the ingredients, gently scrub in the shower, rinse off, and then admire your firm-looking thighs and butt. The smoothing effects will last for hours, Wilson says. Store any extra mixture in a mason jar for up to five days.

Expert tip: Do not use regular ground (not-instant) coffee, unless there's a sexy plumber you want to invite over — it will clog the drain.

B's bonus tip

Banish excess shine

- This isn't for everyday, but if you're prepping for a special occasion, "wash, moisturize — and then prime with Milk of Magnesia," Wilson says. "It acts as a barrier for the excessive sebum that builds up, and keeps your face smooth and matte the entire day." Just dab it on with a cotton ball and then cover the chalkiness with a light tinted moisturizer or powder.

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Turn back time for decor trends in your future

If you want to invest in your home's decor, simply look back 30 years for the next big thing. Yes, elements of the '80s are creeping back into our lives. Here's a quick compilation of coming decor trends

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Piping dreams

Look for less nail-head trims, button tufting and exposed furniture legs. The upcoming trends include skirted sofas, very low profile legs, piping trims and leather details. Contrast piping shows off shapely lines. Groove Chair Custom, $1,300, urbanbarn.com

Hand-forged metallics

Goodbye nickel and brass. Hello hand-forged steel, raw bronze and hammered zinc for a handmade look in home accessories. Hess Side Chair, $229, crateandbarrel.com

Concrete ideas

Travertine stone from the 1980s is gone, but modern interiors will have concrete finishes and stone looks for a touch of nature inside the home. Malay Cast Concrete Coffee Table, $800, restorationhardware.com

Sofas go deep

Be gone, you skinny-armed sofa. Wide, square arms, deep seating and slipcovers make their return. McGill deep-seat sofa, $4,200, montauksofa.com

Tone-on-tone carpets

Lately, rugs have been treated as art for the floors, with bright colours and shocking patterns. Look for tone-on-tone carpets made with luxurious materials like virgin wool, silk and mohair. Vintage Grey VCO9, $13,500, elte.com

Symmetry meets its match

People have been trying for years to conquer the eclectic look with end tables and small furnishings. The next wave of decorators will keep it simple and create symmetry. Dark Zinc Open Nightstand, $555, restorationhardware.com

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A bit of chew, some crunch and lots of yum

Salad Spotlight. While Metro's week of lightening your plate ends tomorrow, today enjoy this lentil salad that requires no effort

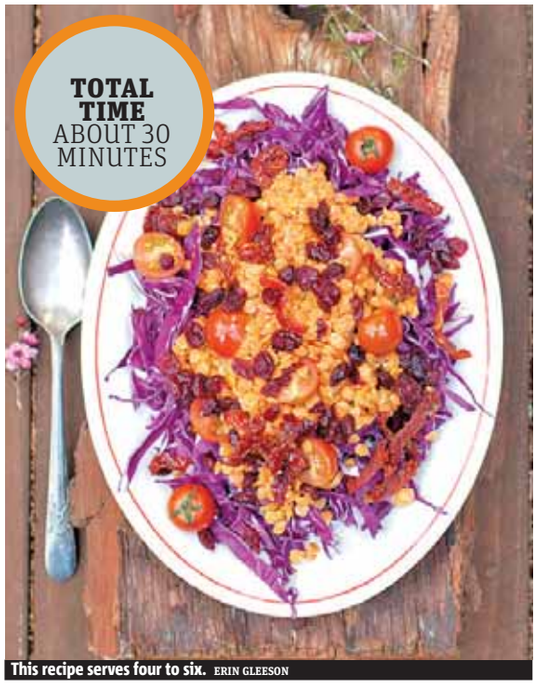
"I like my salads to be more filling and 'meaty', so I use more chopped vegetables and sometimes even cooked ingredients as well," writes Erin Gleeson in her book The Forest Feast. "All of (my salads) can be served at room temperature, which means that they are easy to make ahead and keep in the fridge for a weeknight dinner, or when getting ready for a party.

Gleeson also notes, "Canned lentils work great (for this salad), but if you make your own, boil them like pasta on low to avoid them turning to mush. This filling salad is tossed with sun-dried tomatoes, purple cabbage, cherry tomatoes and dried cranberries."

The dressing keeps in the fridge for at least one week. Before using it, bring it to room temperature.

1. To be quick, use canned (lentils). If from scratch, follow package instructions.

2. If using dry red lentils, they can get mushy easily, so I cook them on medium-low for 15-20 min. until al dente, then strain like pasta and cool



This recipe serves four to six. ERIN GLEESON

3. Mix lentils with sun-dried tomatoes, cranberries and halved cherry tomatoes. Spread over shredded cabbage and dress with Lemon-Mustard Vinaigrette.

Lemon-Mustard Vinaigrette

1. (Combine all ingredients and) shake it, baby!

RECIPE ADAPTED FROM THE FOREST FEAST BY ERIN GLEESON (STEWART, TABORI & CHANG, 2014)

Ingredients

Salad
- 2 cup (400 g) cooked lentils
- 1/2 cup (30 g) sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/2 cup (64 g) dried cranberries
- 1 cup (150 g) halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 cup (140 g) shredded purple cabbage

Lemon-Mustard Vinaigrette
- 3/4 cup (180 ml) olive oil
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) lemon juice
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp maple syrup

For your phone

Food Sorted (iPad/iPhone; free)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

This Foodie's guide to YouTube collects videos for their techniques, recipes, and laughs. You can filter out clips by your dietary preferences and save your favourites as a video cookbook.

Cookbook of the Week

Forage in the forest for earthy goodness

The inspiration behind The Forest Feast is authenticity at its best. Author Erin Gleeson moved to a cabin in a California forest and learned to rely on nature. It's no wonder that most of the book's 100 vegetarian recipes call for only a few ingredients and require very few steps. METRO

Unlikely leaders clash

Both at 3-0. Eskimos, Bombers stand as the biggest surprises of the CFL season so far

Eskimos quarterback Mike Reilly ranks third in passing yards with 738 through three weeks. Ranked second with 871 passing yards is Drew Willy, who the Eskimos will take on in Winnipeg on Thursday. DEREK LEUNG/GETTY IMAGES

Not many would have picked the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and Edmonton Eskimos to be leading the league early in this CFL season.

"I don't think very many people did," Bombers offensive lineman Glenn January said Wednesday, on the eve of the two 3-0 CFL West clubs' first meeting of 2014.

"It's just a testament to what both clubs have been able to accomplish in the off-season. I think we both decided that serious changes had to be made and we've seen that on the field."

Edmonton trailed the West and Winnipeg the East as they finished out of the playoffs in 2013 and both sacked their coaches, dipping into the Argos' pool to pluck Chris Jones and Mike O'Shea to lead their recovery.

Edmonton defensive tackle Almondo Sewell, the CFL's sack leader and defensive player of the week, said it all has to be kept in perspective just three games into the season.

"We were both terrible last year and now we're like top of the league but, like I say, it's a long year, anything can happen," said Sewell.

Besides the coaching changes, much of their success has been laid in the hands of their young quarterbacks — the Bombers' Drew Willy and Mike Reilly in Edmonton.

"In the huddle, they're the exact same," said Winnipeg receiver Nick Moore, who played with Reilly in B.C.

"Calling out the play call, making sure that guys are (paying) attention to details, paying attention to the little things. They're both leaders, making sure everybody's in the right place, doing the right things."

They have also known each other for years, ever since they met at the 2009 NFL combine.

As Sewell says, the season is young, but in quarterback statistics, Willy sits at No. 2 in the league with 871 passing yards and Reilly (738) is at No. 3, behind Toronto's Ricky Ray (982) at No. 1.

Winnipeg has its own defensive guru in Gary Etcheverry, who has also introduced some new wrinkles this season to confuse offences.

One thing O'Shea is hoping for Thursday is fewer penalties, suggesting wins are going to be harder to come by if things don't change. The Bombers had 15 for 148 yards last week in Montreal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Just as we forgot about 2013, we kind of forgot about the first three games as well."

QB Mike Reilly says the Eskimos are focused only on Thursday's game against the Blue Bombers.

Week 4 pick

Eskimos at Bombers, Thursday, 7:30 p.m., TSN

They're the talk of the CFL and easily the league's biggest early season surprises.

Winnipeg's Drew Willy — after serving as the backup in Saskatchewan — has emerged as a bona fide star in his first season as a league starter. The former Buffalo star is the CFL's second-ranked passer with 871 yards and has completed over 65 per cent of his passes with five TDs against two interceptions.

But Edmonton will present Winnipeg with its toughest opponent this season.

Not only do the Eskimos boast a rugged defence, but they have a potent receiving corps that features Adarius Bowman and veteran slotback Fred Stamps.

Pick: Edmonton

4 SPORTS

Six keys to a Blue Jays surge

The Blue Jays (49-47) are currently on pace to win about 83 games, which won't be enough to win the division or earn a wild-card spot. Here's what the Jays need to do to get to the 90-or-so wins it'll take to bring the playoffs back to Toronto.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Photos by Getty Images

1 Improve with RISP

The Jays have struggled badly to cash in runners in scoring position this year, hitting just .244, which ranks 18th in the majors. While the club sits fifth overall in total runs scored, 43 per cent of those runs have come via their league-leading 116 homers. So they need to find other ways to manufacture runs — particularly against tougher pitchers who are less likely to give up the long ball.

2 Go deeper

When the Jays were enjoying success in May, their starters pitched to a 3.42 ERA (second-best in the AL) and ranked third in the majors in innings pitched, averaging more than six per start. In April, June and July they averaged 5-2/3 innings. Mark Buehrle and R.A. Dickey will carry the heaviest load, but youngsters Drew Hutchison and Marcus Stroman, pictured, must step up for the Jays to succeed.

3 Lower walk rate

The Jays' pitching staff, both starters and relievers, has combined for the second-highest walk rate in the majors, behind only the Chicago White Sox. Walks and hit batters represent more than 30 per cent of the Jays' total base runners against. The bullpen, in particular, has to find a way to regain their command. Their walk rate is nearly 25 per cent higher than it was last season.

4 Address the 'pen

Speaking of the bullpen, whether via trade or through internal promotion, the Jays need to do something to provide a reliable right-handed bridge to Casey Janssen, pictured. Brett Cecil has served well from the left side, as has Aaron Loup, but with the marked declines of Steve Delabar (currently in Triple-A Buffalo) and Sergio Santos, the Jays need to shore up the right side.

5 A veteran infielder

The hole left in the Jays' infield by Brett Lawrie, pictured, to injury seems more glaring every day. His versatility is the key to the platoon with Steve Tolleson and Juan Francisco, and in his absence, the left side of the infield has looked distressingly porous. The club needs some kind of stabilizing force that can provide more consistent production at the plate and adequate defence in the field.

6 Get/stay healthy

Easier said then done, but what the Jays' recent stretch has shown is just how vulnerable their lineup is to injury. They need their injured position players — Lawrie, Edwin Encarnacion, pictured, and Adam Lind — to get back as soon as possible to steady what has been a paper-thin lineup. With 66 games remaining, time is quickly running out.

John Singleton living rags-to-riches tale

Golf. Factory worker earns spot in British Open through qualifier

John Singleton had just finished up a practice round along the Irish Sea when four young girls approached him from the other side of the fence.

"Are you famous?" one of them asked.

"I'm playing in the Open," Singleton replied, trying to keep a straight face. "That's pretty famous, ain't it?"

Actually, there's no more improbable player at Royal Liverpool than this 30-year-old factory worker, who lives 10 minutes down the road and qualified for the British Open on his very first try.

Singleton strolled around the course Wednesday with two-time major champion John Daly and PGA Tour regular Dustin Johnson, a pair of Americans who didn't know the stunning back-story of the real-life Rocky in their group.

Johnson introduced himself on the first tee but didn't inquire further until they got to the third hole.

"Do you play on the European Tour?" Johnson finally asked.

"No," Singleton replied, "I work in a factory."

He is the epitome of why this tournament is called the "Open," a guy with no resumé to speak of playing his way into golf's oldest championship.

Fans take photos with John Singleton in Hoylake, England, Wednesday.

PAUL NEWBERRY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This is the sort of rags-to-riches stuff normally reserved for the movies, the nobody who becomes somebody against all odds.

Singleton's real job — at least for now — is at a resin factory not far from Royal Liverpool. He holds down the 8 a.m.-to-4:30 p.m. shift at Advanced Electrical Varnishes, where he drives a forklift and mixes the resin, a thick compound used as a waterproof coating for wiring, circuit boards and other electrical devices.

"He does a full job for us," said his boss, Jonathan Kemp, who'll be at the course to cheer Singleton on and gave all the employees a paid holiday so they could attend.

AUGMENTED REALITY

→ Scan the image with the Metro News app for more notes from the British Open.

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

After Singleton gets off work, he usually heads to a local golf course to practise for several more hours — especially in the summer, when the sun hangs in the sky until nearly 10 o'clock.

"I want to get a sponsor so I can continue to play golf," he said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Most valuable franchises

Leafs the only NHL club to crack Forbes' top 50

The Maple Leafs are the only NHL team on Forbes' list of the 50 most valuable franchises in sports, checking in at No. 26.

According to Forbes, the Leafs are worth $1.15 billion US and have been the most valuable NHL team since 2005.

Spanish-based soccer club Real Madrid is No. 1 at $3.44 billion. Major League Baseball's New York Yankees are the top North American team on the list, fourth at $2.5 billion.

Despite being in the process of selling for $2 billion, the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers did not make the list, which finished with 50th-ranked AC Milan at $856 million.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB. Selig comments welcomed by those hoping for Expos' big-league return

A former Expos standout who is spearheading an attempt to bring Major League Baseball back to Montreal believes comments by Bud Selig mean the city is firmly on the sport's radar.

The MLB commissioner's remark that Montreal would be an "excellent candidate" for a potential franchise was music to the ears of Warren Cromartie.

Selig said he was impressed by the fact 96,350 fans turned up in Montreal last March for a pair of exhibition games between the Toronto Blue Jays and the New York Mets.

"It's great that he said it and I think that with those two games we had in spring training, we really showed Major League Baseball," Cromartie told The Canadian Press on Wednesday.

The Expos played in Montreal from 1969 to 2004, when they departed for Washington, D.C. The team suffered from dwindling attendance in its final years at Olympic Stadium and were owned by the league in its final seasons. Selig was commissioner in 2004.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You may be tempted to be nice for what you can get out of someone but do you have to be so mercenary? Put others first and be genuinely interested in what they're doing.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You are entitled to enjoy yourself and there is no reason why you should feel guilty just because some people have not been as lucky as you.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You will get the chance to do things for loved ones today but make sure they don't take advantage of you. Also, being of service does not mean you can't have fun as well.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You know you can get what you want but that does not give you the right to take as you please. If you go to extremes now, you will have to pay for it later.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Someone has been taking liberties and you need to confront them about it. If you leave it longer they may get the impression that they can take from you as and when they please.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You may have strong opinions but remember that not everyone sees things the same way. Make an effort to find out what other people think.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Treat what happens over the next few days as an opportunity for advancement. And treat people you meet as potential friends and allies.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is the ideal time to let your mind wander because it will lead you in new directions. For inspiration, connect with those who make you feel good.

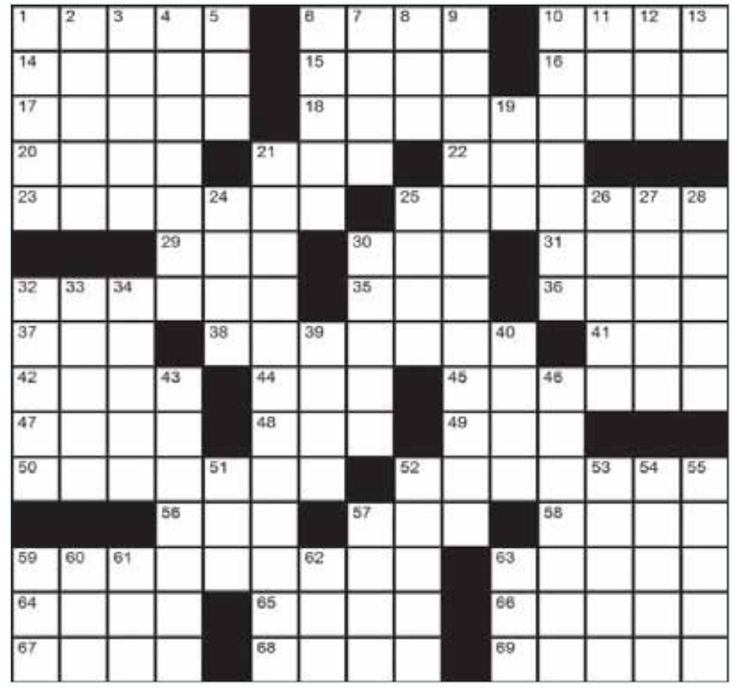
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The next few days will bring surprises. It's not often you are this lucky so make the most of it and don't think there is some kind of catch. There isn't.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The only way you are going to get what you desire is to communicate with those who can help. Co-operate with them fully and make sure their and your needs are catered to.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If you're motivated by greed, you are unlikely to get what you desire. If, however, you are driven by a genuine desire to help others you will succeed beyond your wildest dreams.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
The cosmic omens are so good that you no doubt think you can do as you please. To a certain extent that is true but you should do things for other people as well.

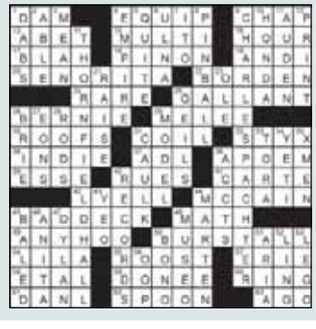
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Parks Canada mascot
6. Egg: French
10. Guzzle
14. Do well on the test: 2 wds.
15. ___ (Play's opening)
16. English river
17. Canadian series, "Due __"
18. Home reno show's ending: 2 wds.
20. Yes x 2: Spanish
21. My own: Latin
22. Hydrocarbon suffix
23. 'Them', to Us
25. Name and __
29. Botanist Mr. Gray
30. Uncooked
31. Dud
32. Tom Cruise vampire
35. Abu Dhabi is its cap.
36. Lucy Lawless role
37. Wrath
38. Northeast Saskatchewan town; or, actress Ashley
41. Ford fabrication
42. Alice's portrayer on "The Brady Bunch", ___. Davis (b.1926 - d.2014)
44. Stitch
45. Brilliancy
47. After-Q queue
48. TV's "Mad __"
49. 'E' in BCE
50. Entrepreneur's new venture
52. Banned basement businesses, briefly
56. Long-snouted fish
57. Moscow's locale, briefly
58. Retro toy, __ Bat
59. Cereal brand
63. Bill __, "Saturday Night Live" alum
64. Klutz's shout!
65. Louisiana, par exemple
66. Plaudit
67. Nice names?
68. Count on
69. Slangly-spelled agendas

Down
1. Out, in fashion
2. Flip _ __
3. Reduce. __. Recycle.
4. British Columbia port city, 'A Marvel of Nature and Industry'
5. Football player, e.g.
6. Hall & __
7. Canyon feedback
8. Sport-__ (All-purpose vehicle)
9. The __-__ (1969 novel by Canadian author Margaret Laurence)
10. Canadian makeup company, ___
11. Shade
12. Can. neighbour
13. Collective Soul song
19. Finish
21. Song by British band The Smiths that goes: "And the flesh you so fancifully fry / Is not succulent, tasty or kind...": 3 wds.
24. Time __ __ a premium
25. Stuck keyboard letter
26. Put into office
27. Navigational aid-at-sea
28. Fifth wheel
30. Uniquely-spelled song by California band LIFE
32. "Pretty Little __"
33. Surrealist artist Max
34. Austrian actress Ms. Berger
39. Percolate
40. Continental currency
43. Michael __ (Regina-born actor/tenor)
46. Canadian Rockies range, __ Range
51. Smidgen
52. Like the wind sometimes
53. George Gershwin co-composed tune: "Tee-__-Un-Bum-Bo"
54. Really request
55. Classifies
57. Authentic
59 Michael, to Kirk
60. Boo-__(Sniff!)
61. Circling stat.
62. 'Favour' suffix
63. She's-not

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

		6		8			2	
	2	3		4				
8		4			7			
	4	9						5
	3		5		1		4	
7						8	3	
			4			9		7
				9		3	6	
	1			5		2		

Yesterday's Sudoku

4	2	9	5	6	8	3	7	1
5	8	7	3	9	1	4	2	6
1	3	6	7	2	4	8	9	5
3	6	1	8	7	5	9	4	2
7	4	2	6	3	9	1	5	8
9	5	8	4	1	2	7	6	3
6	9	3	2	8	7	5	1	4
8	1	4	9	5	6	2	3	7
2	7	5	1	4	3	6	8	9

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© 2014 Mercedes-Benz Canada Inc. 2014 C 350 4MATIC Avantgarde Edition and 2014 ML 350 BlueTEC with Bi-Xenon package shown above, Total Price $55,440/$65,040. **Total price of $44,890/$64,040 includes freight/PDI of up to $1,995, dealer admin fee of $495, air-conditioning levy of $100, EHF tires of up to $16, PPSA up to $27.80, AMVIC fee of $6.25, and all applicable taxes due at signing. *Lease offers based on the 2014 C 300 4MATIC™ Avantgarde EditionSedan /2014 ML 350 BlueTEC 4MATIC™ Avantgarde Edition Sedan are available only through Mercedes-Benz Financial Services on approved credit for a limited time. Lease example based on $358/$698 per month for 27/39 months. Down payment or equivalent trade of $7,790/$9,197plus security deposit of $400/$700 and applicable taxes due at lease inception. MSRP starting at $42,250/$61,400. Lease APR of 2.9%/3.9% applies. Total obligation is $17,829/$37,105. 18,000/18,000 km/year allowance ($0.20/$0.20/km for excess kilometres applies). Finance example is based on a 60/60-month term and a finance APR of 0.9%/1.9% and an MSRP of $42,250/$61,400. Monthly payment is $614/$966 (excluding taxes) with $6,865/$8,777 down payment. Cost of borrowing is $830/$2,710 for a total obligation of $43,692/$66,719. [2]First, second and third month payment waivers are capped for the 2014 B 250/2014 C 300 4MATIC™ Avantgarde Edition Sedan/2014 ML 350 BlueTEC 4MATIC™ up to a total of $1,200/$1,350/$2,550 (including taxes) for lease programs and up to a total of $1,800/$1,950/$3,150 (including taxes) for finance programs. Vehicle license, insurance, and registration are extra. Offers may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. See your authorized Mercedes-Benz dealer for details or call the Mercedes-Benz Customer Relations Centre at 1-800-387-0100. Dealer may lease or finance for less. Offers end July 31, 2014.